Building a Sense of Identity Belonging and Culture Through Place-Making and Creative Co-Design: Practices within New Zealand's Educational Context

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Abstract: The key role and the importance of arts and culture in shaping today's creative economy and bringing vibrant range of creative and cultural activities to the public has been steadily growing in the past few years. This paper investigates the question of how design research contributes to belonging and wellbeing, specifically in the context of Aotearoa, New Zealand. Through a proposed three-folded structure: a) Toi Whītiki in Action, b) Aotearoa – New Zealand and Education Context, and c) Student Case Studies, this paper delves deeper into student creative projects and city co-design practices to enhance a city's status of wellbeing and engagement with diverse culture.

Keywords: aotearoa; arts and culture; design research; collaborative practices; placemaking; wellbeing

1. Introduction

The creative industry sector is gaining more and more momentum, and perhaps it will hit 'pick creativity' in the next years to come. The arts are contributing as well towards the creative entrepreneurship, as the CreativeNZ surveys shows: "New Zealanders believe the arts make their communities better places to live and agree they should be a part of everyone's education" ("New Zealanders and the arts summary report", 2017, p.5). Furthermore: "Eight out of ten New Zealanders have participated in the arts or attended an arts event, or both, in the last 12 months resulting in a record high for arts engagement (80%)" ("New Zealanders and the arts summary report", 2017, p.6). The benefits of the arts, as stated in the survey, are plentiful: boost of confidence, creativity, a sense of belonging; all the signifying badges of well-being and effective impact. "'New Zealanders recognise the positive contribution the arts make to supporting strong, thriving communities and the development of happy, confident young New Zealanders,' said Creative New Zealand Chief Executive Stephen Wainwright" ("New Zealanders and the arts summary report", 2017, p.1).

'Art for the many, not for the few', as the New Zealand Prime Minister and Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage voiced in an opinion piece (Ardern, 2018). Taking the framework of the Auckland Council document Toi Whītiki: Auckland's Arts and Culture Strategic Action Plan (2015), this paper looks into the question of how design research contributes to belonging and wellbeing, specifically in New Zealand. Through a proposed two-folded structure: a) Toi Whītiki in Action, b) Aotearoa – New Zealand and Education Context, and c) Student Case, this paper delves deeper into student creative projects and city co-design practices to enhance a city's status of wellbeing and engagement with diverse culture.

2. How Tāmaki Makaurau - Auckland Plans to be the Most Liveable and Culturally Diverse City

In the period between 2015 and 2025, Tāmaki Makaurau - Auckland, will face the need to respond to continued growth, changing demographics, and increasing international competitiveness in the creative sector. In order to address those areas in need of support and make the most of opportunities, Auckland Council and its subsidies having been planning the future of the creative sector to make Auckland the most liveable city. There are several strategic initiatives which contributes to this government goal such as the Toi Whītiki Arts and Culture Strategic Action Plan ("Toi Whitiki Strategic Action Plan", 2015). This strategic plan has set goals and key objectives for the duration of ten years to develop and grow arts and culture in Auckland. Currently the Auckland, Tourism, Events and Economic Development (ATEED) are calling out to the Auckland community to have a say on how the city can grow the potential of the creative sector through a "Creative Industries Strategy" towards 2030 ("Creative Auckland 2030"). The Auckland Co-Design Lab is another example of an Auckland Council supported organisation that is calling for community engagement. This initiative aims to work with central government and community partners to apply co-design principles and a perspective view to complex social issues. This paper situates Toi Whitiki in relation to the New Zealand government goals for the creative sector, looking into what is the new data and target goals in the field, and how enhancing wellbeing through creative means, will further expand the impact of arts, culture and a sense of belonging.

The key role and the importance of arts and culture in shaping today's creative economy and bringing vibrant range of creative and cultural activities to the public has been steadily growing in the past few years. Case example is Tāmaki Makaurau - Auckland, which through the Auckland's Arts and Culture Strategic Action Plan (Toi Whītiki) strives to achieve the vision of becoming the "world's most liveable city". As it is stated in Toi Whītiki:

> Arts and culture play a key role in the cultural, social and economic life of Auckland, making it a more dynamic and attractive place to live, work and visit. It connects and strengthens our communities, gives us a sense of identity and pride, improves individual and community health and well-being, and contributes to a strong economy. (2015, p.4)

Toi Whītiki aims to deliver on the vision and outcomes of the Auckland Plan (the key strategic document for Auckland Council), which includes the integration of arts and culture into

everyday lives, and to address the challenges and opportunities in the ever-growing and increasingly diverse city. Following on from the strategic directions in the Auckland plan, Toi Whītiki is a core strategy recognising the importance of people's engagement with arts and culture and boosting participation in shaping stronger communal bonds, wellbeing, and sense of partaking an active role in shaping Auckland to be truly a liveable and multi-cultural city. The action plan has a 10-year timeframe in order to allow time to measure the impacts and outcomes and has been developed by Auckland Council in collaboration with the arts and culture sector. Commented upon by councillor Alf Filipaina: "Public engagement on Toi Whītiki, led by Auckland Council, clearly showed that Aucklanders understand that arts and culture are fundamental to a healthy society and a good quality of life" ("Toi Whitiki Strategic Action Plan", 2015, p.3). To support this statement, the Action Plan gives the figures that 88% of Aucklanders believe that the arts are good for you, 86% agree the arts help to improve society, and 90% agree that they learn about different cultures through the arts ("Toi Whitiki Strategic Action Plan", 2015, p.4). In 2014, over 90% of Aucklanders attended or participate in at least one arts event. The number of people participating in arts and cultural activities is growing exponentially each year, which is evident from the numbers and figures provided by Creative New Zealand (Figure 1). The action plan recognises the importance that the creative sector plays in bringing wider economic, cultural, and social benefits, and supports opportunities to maximise the sector's contribution to the vision of greater Auckland.

In relation to the Toi Whītiki plan, Auckland Council is looking at South Auckland as becoming "the first New Zealand Maker City, known to for intergenerational creativity, entrepreneurship and innovation" ("Toi Whitiki Strategic Action Plan", 2015, p.5). Through the official strategy *South Auckland: City of Makers Strategy* (2018*)*, the Auckland Council puts in focus how "in the next five years, we will be focusing on strengthening the maker movement and growing the ecosystem of spaces, people, knowledge and infrastructure" ("South Auckland: City of Makers Strategy" 2018, p.6). This plan operates in the broader scope of The Southern Initiative (TSI), which was launched in 2012, with the goal to "plan and deliver a long-term programme of co-ordinated investment and actions to bring about transformational social, economic and physical change in this area" ("South Auckland: City of Makers Strategy", 2018, p.6). Tamaki Makaurau - Auckland, is already a city that exhibits qualities of a strong leader in the creative economy, following the statistics that "with nearly 18, 000 people working in concentrated clusters, supported by some of the world's best talent - 49% of the country's creative jobs are based here, contributing $1.8 billion in gross domestic product (GDP) annually or 2.3% of Auckland's GDP" ("Toi Whitiki Strategic Action Plan", 2015, p.54). Overall, working within the framework of the South Auckland Maker City plan, Auckland Council puts forward few points that will focus on: "Celebrating South Auckland successes locally and nationally"; "creating market opportunities by jumpstarting key initiatives"; and to "work with communities, government and private sector to promote south Auckland as a hub for learning and innovation" ("South Auckland: City of Makers Strategy", 2018, p.54).
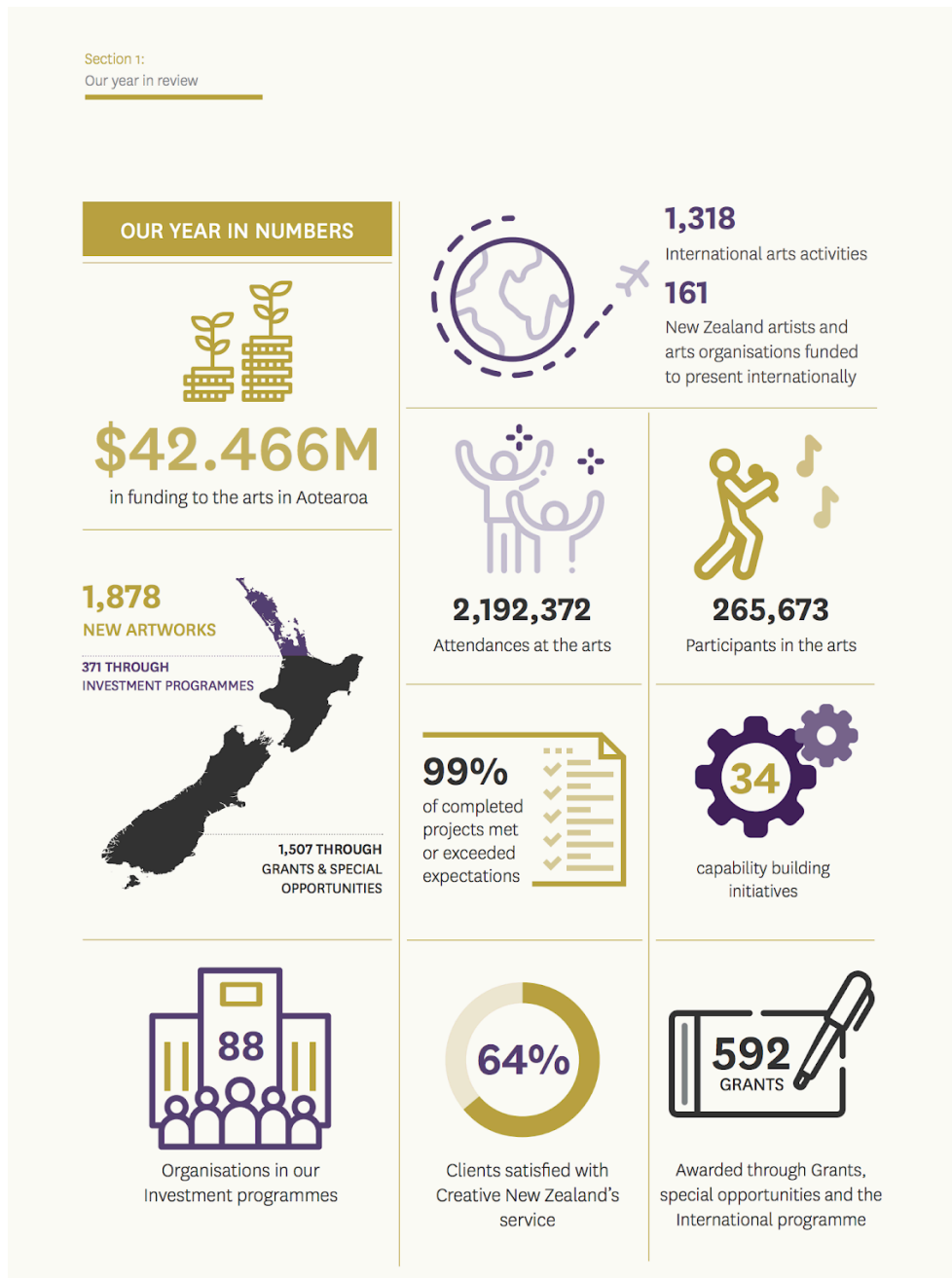
Figure 1   Creative New Zealand Annual Report 2017

The vision for arts and culture in Toi Whītiki is focused on six key categories: Participation; Investment; Infrastructure; Place-making; Identity; and Creative Economy. In order to get a better grasp of why and how these key points are included in the action plan and what role they play; they will be discussed further below. Starting from the very first one - Participation.

Participation is the rudimentary founding block of the Action Plan. What participation means for the vision of the Auckland Plan is that "all Aucklanders can access and participate in

arts and culture" ("Toi Whitiki Strategic Action Plan", 2015, p.18). The participation aspect consists of three Action Plan points: a) increase opportunities for Aucklanders to experience and participate in arts and culture; b) better communicate what's on offer; c) remove barriers to access and participation ("Toi Whitiki Strategic Action Plan", 2015, p.20). The vital role that participation has is to ensure that indeed all Aucklanders, despite age, cultural background, and mobility, can partake in engaging with the arts and culture activities: "research shows that while Aucklanders value arts and culture in all their forms, many do not engage with them, and access and participation are not equitable across the region" ("Toi Whitiki Strategic Action Plan", 2015, p.24). In order to address these barriers, the three sub-points need to be put in action to ensure that participation is accessible to all Aucklanders.

Another important aspect that needs to be taken deeper look into is 'place-making' (point four of the Action Plan) and the role of arts and culture as intrinsic elements to Auckland's place-making agenda. Auckland plays a vital role as a creative incubator for place-making, and strives to enhance further the engagement and liveability of the city:

> We've heard that Aucklanders want to improve the liveability, beauty, vitality and sustainability of the region and its people through creativity and innovation. While 76% of them agree that the arts help define who we are, we know we need to do better in communicating the key role that arts and culture, and specifically public art, have in making a great city. Making it easier to create art in public places will go some way towards encouraging more people to be part of the transformation. (Toi Whitiki, 2015, p.43)

Following from this statement, in order for the city to indeed do better in communicating the key role that arts and culture, including public art, have in making a significant impact, there are two major points Action Plan points put down for consideration: a) the narrative - tell people's stories by encouraging unique and distinctive public art that reflects and responds to place-making; and b) make it easier to plan, create and deliver innovative art and design in public places ("Toi Whitiki Strategic Action Plan", 2015, p.44). This links as well to the next point of the six major Action Plan categories, which is 'Identity' (point five). Auckland celebrates a unique cultural identity and the status of the city as a melting pot of different cultures and the standout feature which is the vibrant *Māori culture* ("Toi Whitiki Strategic Action Plan", 2015, p.48). To be able to stand out on the global stage, Auckland Council is firmly supporting and putting in action the vision of strong local identities, which gives the unique flavour of the arts and culture produced here:

> Combined with our strong European heritage, robust Pacific cultures and growing Asian identities and their festivals, Aucklanders are increasingly enjoying cultural experiences. An exciting blend of artistic styles, techniques and performance arts is emerging and can be supported by helping these groups to network. Auckland's indigenous culture and strong contemporary art practice are already growth areas in its visitor economy, and this can be built on. ("Toi Whitiki Strategic Action Plan", 2015, p.48)

An example of growing Asian identities and for other cultures to embrace the Asian community through fostering enjoyable cultural experiences is the Chinese Lantern Festival in Auckland. In 2019 the festival celebrated its 20th anniversary, providing for its visitors the

experience of "hundreds of handmade Chinese lanterns, music and dance performances, martial arts demonstrations, traditional Chinese art and craft – there's a range of activities for all ages" ("Lantern Festival" [APA], n.d). Another big major festival, celebrating robust Pacific cultures, is the Pasifika Festival. Running since 1993, is the "largest Pacific Island cultural festival of its kind in the world" ("Lantern Festival" [APA], n.d) festival of its type in the world and attracts over 200,000 visitors annually. The festival consists of "...11 distinctly different villages, each with a performance stage and market, to show the diversity of the Pacific cultures represented. The villages represent the Cook Islands, Fiji, Niue, Aotearoa, Hawaii, Samoa, Tahiti, Tuvalu, Tonga, Tokelau and Solomon Islands" ("Lantern Festival" [APA], n.d).

New Zealand is evolving through place-making, creative co-design and inclusiveness values - it is hoped there will be a "synergy", "the coming together of people" and substantial social impact. Opening opportunities for the community to shape 'their' city is a real strategic approach. The Auckland Council strategic plans support the significance of community participation shaping stronger communal bonds, wellbeing, and sense of partaking through people's engagement with each other via the arts and culture as well as advocate Auckland to truly be a liveable, harmonious and multi-cultural city.

3. Aotearoa - New Zealand and Education Context

Historically, biculturalism has been central to New Zealand's self-conception. This has evolved with the Treaty of Waitangi which, in 1840 promoted "We are one people now" (Sinclair, 1971) and then 150 years later became "Two peoples, one nation" (Bathurst, 2011). However, New Zealand's growing polyethnic diversity, is proving that both biculturalism and multiculturalism play a role in New Zealand's evolving identity and are necessary for strong and healthy ethnic relations in New Zealand (Ward, & Liu 2012). For example, the recent mosque terrorist shooting in Christchurch this year, radically defined New Zealand's national identity in solidarity and unity against racism.

In the 2016 Social Report, the Ministry of Social Development ("MSD", 2016) stated that under the section of Cultural Identity, a desired outcome was to value the cultural diversity in New Zealand. (Ministry of Social Development, n.d.) Thus, this raised the question: How do we promote the preservation of a multicultural national identity?

Ethnic groups in Tāmaki Makaurau

in 2013 and projections to 2038

Population in 2013

Projection to 2038

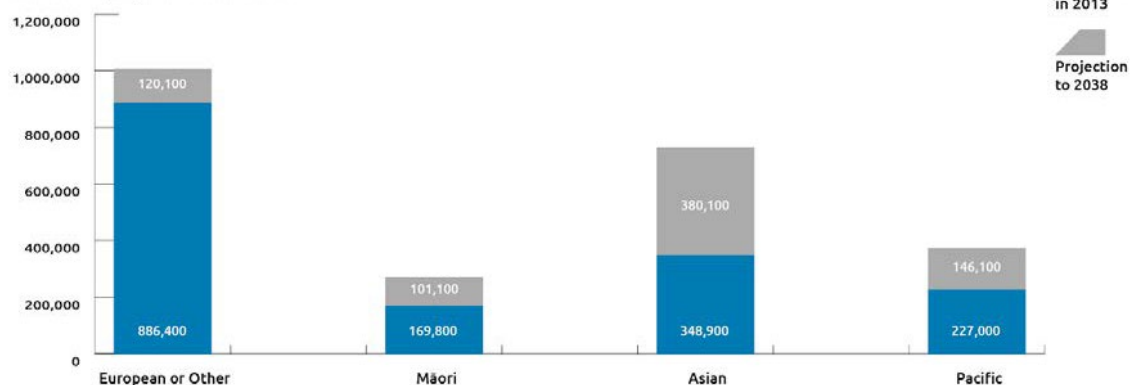|	European or Other	Māori	Asian	Pacific
Projection to 2038	120,100	101,100	380,100	146,100
Population in 2013	886,400	169,800	348,900	227,000

Figure 2   Source: Stats NZ, subnational ethnic population projections.

Auckland University of Technology (AUT) is the second largest and one of the leading universities of New Zealand, in the field of innovation and technology. As a young millennial university who will be celebrating its 20th anniversary in 2020, it is one of the world's best modern universities – Times Higher Education has ranked AUT as the top millennial university in Australasia and in the top 1% of universities in the world. The university's mission is simply "Great Graduates" [AUT, n.d] with a vision to respond to its place in the world through exceptional learning experiences and to contribute wellbeing and prosperity through discovery and application of knowledge. Fundamental to its vision to be a place where people love to work and learn are its values: "Tāwhaitia te ara o te tika, te pono me te aroha, kia piki ki te taumata tiketike - The path of integrity, respect, and compassion; scale the heights of achievement" [AUT, n.d]. As a university in Aotearoa - New Zealand, AUT is committed to the rights and obligations articulated in New Zealand's founding document The Treaty of Waitangi. The university advocates Māori presence and participation in all aspects of university life including the AUT Values framework and AUT authentically integrating Mātauranga Māori within research, teaching and learning. Furthermore, the emphasis put on The Treaty of Waitangi in relation to teaching and learning practices can be summed up in the following way: "The Treaty of Waitangi principle puts students at the centre of teaching and learning, asserting that they should experience a curriculum that engages and challenges them, is forward-looking and inclusive, and affirms New Zealand's unique identity" [AUT, n.d].

Students who study in *Aotearoa* - New Zealand will be submerged into a curriculum where the Treaty of Waitangi principles places students at the centre of teaching and learning, supporting that they should experience a curriculum that engages and challenges them, is forward-looking and inclusive, and affirms New Zealand's unique identity. An amalgamation of the Treaty of Waitangi and Mātauranga Māori has shaped AUT to be committed to building a safe, positive, and inclusive higher learning environment characterised by the free exchange of diverse ideas, skills and cultural perspectives. This

is evident through a range of student's projects that explore identity, culture, sense of belonging and wellbeing.

4. Case Studies

AUT programmes such as the Creative Technologies attracts diverse students who aspire to be entrepreneurial by hacking singular approaches to disciplines, technologies, methodologies and collaboratively innovate through transdisciplinary. The programme sits within the Faculty of Design and Creative Technologies and is recognized as a highly visible place for the development of critical and creative skills, amongst the creative industry and students. This highly visible place, which can be better framed as "creative place-making" (Markusen 2014), is an "inherently restless, unfinished process", that seeks and supports the continuous flow of creativity, and preparing the students for "pursuing the chimera of creative entrepreneurship" (Schlesinger, 2016, p.6). As an example of establishing strong co-design practices and a sense of collaborative place-making, the faculty paper Mahitani (Collaborative Practices) serves as an initiative across the DCT Schools, in order to better understand each other's background and culture and to provide the space and tools to connect with the community through an interdisciplinary community or industry project. All DCT students must take the paper as a prerequisite, which includes ethics and guiding principles of tikanga and mātauranga Māori, in order to instil the sense that they can co-create and co-design as a community and not simply as individual learners and makers. The paper description of Mahitani states:

Introduces concepts of collaborative work, in a wider context of students' work futures, that are underpinned by the guiding principles of tikanga (customary lore, practices and traditions) and mātauranga Māori (Māori-knowledge of the Māori world). Examines a relevant conceptual or thematic issue affecting Aotearoa/New Zealand through the design and completion of a small-scale collaborative project across disciplines. Explores how these concepts of collaboration relate to emerging workplaces and evolving digital work futures. (AUT Documentation)

It is important as well to highlight the learning goals and outcomes of the paper and how they relate to the above-mentioned principles of tikanga and mātauranga Māori. This is achieved through the students working together to identify and select effective collaboration strategies that include decision making and risk taking; an interdisciplinary approach to exploring data and analysing problems; reflect on the collaboration performance using a tikanga and mātauranga Māori framework; reflect on how the practice relates to the future of work across disciplines and digital environments. The project brief is dependent on a real-life client from either a community organization or a company, which provides the students with an external real-life practical learning experience.

Another one of the programme papers in the Creative Technologies - 'Integrative Practice', states as its aim to: "Explore concepts, issues and problems from more than a single disciplinary perspective. Introduces methodologies for integrating knowledge and practices

from different disciplines and allows students to both comprehend and directly address complex issues". Emphasis is put on interdisciplinary approaches and collaboration, to foster comprehension and skills "from more than one disciplinary perspective". This approach is reflected through the student practices and their creative works. Two student cases will be discussed here: Continuum (2018) and Tāngatai Tāngata (2019).

4.1 Continuum (2018)

The project 'Continuum' aims to prompt self-awareness on the performativity of heritage through facilitating conversation between two participants. This is done through an interactive and performative kinetic table. This work arose from the creator's personal desire to understand her own heritage, and to explore and understand the performativity of heritage and remembering. The work's original purpose aimed to embody the creator's journey of self-discovery of her heritage. Also, to prompt others to reconsider and 'remember' their own intangible heritage. However, it was soon realised that these were two separate projects. Thus, the purpose was refined to prompt self-awareness that their relationship with the heritage and past, influences the performance of their identity. The key message being heritage is performative.

Figure 3   'Continuum', Talia Pua (2018)

Figure 4   'Continuum', Talia Pua (2018)

DESIGN PROCESS

When heritage and memory are understood through the frame of active remembering, they are performative. As Harrison (2012) argues, "heritage is primarily not about the past, but instead about our relationship with the present and the future." (p. 4) In this way, heritage and remembering has the power and stimulate to inspire us inspire and influence our actions. From this perspective, like performativity, focus is shifted off the objects of heritage and memory, and onto the process, experience and produced effects of remembering. For the aesthetics, the layout of the table drew inspiration from family tree diagrams. The arcs of the family tree diagram were adapted to represent the continuums. The table design took inspiration from antique Chinese tables so that the participants would feel a sense of heritage before interacting with the work. Furthermore, by reinterpreting a tangible heritage artefact into a kinetic table, participants are symbolically transforming the way they relate with heritage through physically manipulating the composition of the table surface. Regarding performativity, the work drew inspiration from existing performer driven displays and performative surfaces. These included, Reuben Margolin's kinetic sculpture, 'Connected' (Margolin, 2011), MIT's kinetic tabletop, 'Transform' (Ishii, Leithinger, Follmer, Zoran & Schoessler, 2014), and Andreas Vang's 'Tectonic Clock' (Vang, 2015).

The work was developed through extensive prototyping and playtesting of all aspects of the design so to prove the design's fulfilment of the project's intention. The interaction design came from an early role-playing workshop that play-tested different performance approaches to exploring the concepts. From this, the continuum exercise was then further refined through playtesting multiple paper prototypes and cardboard mock-ups that focussed

on different elements of the exercise. For example, the wording and order of the questions, the instructions, the layout and group vs. individual context.

The physical mechanisms and design of the table were all prototyped on low-risk scales first. For example, using cardboard mock-ups, using CAD software for 3D modelling, and paper concepting. This then progressed onto a medium-risk scale where the design of the mechanisms was tested and finalised on a small scale using the chosen materials and methods e.g. plywood and laser-cutting. This progression from low-risk to high-risk scale prototyping was done to minimise costs, i.e. time, money and resources, and maximise the success-rate of the final design by proving that it works beforehand.

All feedback received and decisions made were critically assessed alongside design pillars. These pillars outlined the three key concepts the work needed to engage with, and the three-key aesthetics of play for the desired experience. The play aesthetics were informed by Hunicke, Leblanc and Zubek's (2004) MDA framework for game design. The design pillars were then adapted into a methodology flowchart which assisted in the decision-making process. This evolved an exploration of how to encourage self-expression and reflection, using theories of performativity, Tactile User Interfaces (TUI), and social play.

IMPLEMENTATION OF CONTINUUM

Talia Pua was contacted by an AUT initiative called "Wiser" - an "intimate space designed for conversation, connection, and reflection on the ups and downs of being human", consisting of a "programme of talks, workshops, rituals, and social events to explore how we can develop better self-knowledge and a greater sense of purpose and meaning in our lives", to work with them on implementing Continuum as part of Wiser's programme of workshops and events at AUT in 2020. The curatorial team are currently looking at designing a workshop around 'Continuum' that will focus on heritage and identity. As the artistic director of Wiser stated:

> Continuum has a lot of value for people. I have done work with a lot of individuals who have expressed that they feel disconnected to parts of who they are and their cultural heritage. And I think that Continuum gives them an opportunity to work through some of that. The tactile nature of Continuum, the ability to touch and feel, as well as have a conversation is a really great way to open people up and help them express what they want to say. (Pua, 2018)

As a recognition of the success of the project, it won the Designers Institute of New Zealand Best Design Award, in the category of Student Public Good. This is what the Best Awards Judges stated:

> This thoughtful, tactile experience stood out against a deluge of digitally based entries. We loved the way that the design returns users to a slower, more personal and connected interaction, and we imagine, a deeper conversation about heritage and identity. Wifi-free gamification meets culture in a compelling and beautiful package. (Designers Institute of New Zealand Best Design Awards, 2019)

4.2 Tāngatai Tāngata (Person in People)

Serving as an example is the collaborative duo-project 'Tāngatai Tāngata' (Hobman & Pua, 2019) sought to address New Zealand's multicultural national identity by asking: "what does it mean to be a New Zealander?" Through the development of this project, it became important to find how to conceptualise identity within a New Zealand-specific lens. This led onto drawing on Māori *tikanga*, way of doing, such as *Pepeha* and the *Au to Whakawhanaungatanga* framework. To make these frameworks accessible to the public, 'Tāngatai Tāngata' drew on other disciplines including tangible user interface design, play and interaction, participatory art and data physicalization. "By creating and contributing their own personal 'pepeha tile', participants are encouraged to self-reflect on their own identity within a New Zealand-specific framework, and reflect on how they connect to the wider collective" (Hobman & Pua, 2019).

RELEVANT THEORIES

Initially Pua and Hobson considered theories on social sustainability as being equity between generations (McKenzie, 2004). Specifically, they considered this within a cultural and collective context: how can we sustainably build and maintain collective and cultural identities across generations? Other theories on nationality, identity and social sustainability were also considered within the design and development.

While national identity has been defined as being united in assimilation (Bobro, 2018), 'Tāngatai Tāngata' intends to contribute that national identity is built upon the preservation of its diverse collectives. Identity markers are "a characteristic associated with an individual that they might choose to present to others to support a national identity claim" (Kiely, Bechhofer, Stewart, & McCrone, 2001). For this process to develop, there is a need for more fluid national identity rules to assess identity markers.

PROJECT INCEPTION

The design and development were initially inspired by the research question - "How do we preserve a multicultural national identity?" The phrase "This is how New Zealand introduces itself - *Koinei tā Aotearoa whakamihi*" (pepeha.nz) was the main catalyst in the 'Tāngatai Tāngata' project that prompted to consider: "What would New Zealand's pepeha be?"

MANAAKITANGA

MANAAKI

MANA A KI MAI

MANA A KI ATU

MANA

AU

WHĀNAU

WHĀNAUNGA

WHĀNAUNGATANGA

WHAKAWHĀNAUNGATANGA

Figure 5   Au to Whakawhānaungatanga framework diagram (TKI & Ministry of Education, n.d.)

Through practice as research, it was discovered that contrary to rigid notions about national identity and nationality, "New Zealand-ness" manifests in numerous ways (see images below). Moreover, from discussing with a cultural advisor Pua and Hobson were challenged with how to create a National Pepeha that would represent and relate to everyone.
Thus, it was endeavoured to discover how to create a system in which theoretically the populace could collectively create their own national pepeha. In doing so, how principles could be applied from collaborative and participatory art practices were explored. The Au to Whakawhānaungatanga framework, which was applied to the format to highlight the connection between self and the collective.

An iterative user-centred design approach was applied and throughout the process of creating tangible user interface (TUI), playtesting and interviews were conducted to progress and improve the theory. Each playtest included a follow-up interview using retrospective cognitive probes about the physical aspects, user experience, the choices made and the fundamental theory for the project. Subsequent design and development iterations of the project were through feedback and reflections.

Figure 6   'Tāngatai Tāngata', 2019 Talia Pua and Olivia Hobson

Figure 7   'Tāngatai Tāngata', 2019 Talia Pua and Olivia Hobson

5. Conclusion

Auckland Council have planned a continual growth for the next 15 years, considering the changing demographics, and increasing international competitiveness in the creative sector.

In order to support and leverage opportunities, Auckland Council and its subsidies having been planning the future of the creative sector to make Auckland the most liveable city. This paper has provided an overview of these strategic initiatives which contributes to this government goals to develop and grow arts and culture in Auckland. As New Zealand is increasingly becoming a multi-cultural and diverse city, Toi Whītiki aims to deliver on the vision and outcomes of the Auckland Plan, which includes the integration of arts and culture into everyday lives. For further development and helping to carry the mission of 'most liveable city', initiatives such as Placemaking in Practice (2018), can play a crucial role in positioning creative placemaking as the binding agent of overarching approach to improve neighbourhoods, communities, cities or towns; aiming to make arts and culture truly for all, and not just for the few. It is believed that these actions will address the challenges and opportunities in the ever-growing and increasingly diverse city. The outcomes from such initiatives will positively enhance understanding of different cultures to encourage wellbeing and a sense of belonging.

As concluding notes, it is suggested that tertiary education providers can enhance and build-up the framework for acting as testing spaces/co-designing spaces, and provide place-making approaches for council initiatives. This has been already observed on the level of the student case studies, with reference to the recognition, feedback, a part of an exhibition, and the Wiser initiative—all indications of the public engaging with the arts and culture. Embedding Mātauranga Māori within education and design research provides an open and safe place to experience and explore culture inclusiveness, our place in the world and how we engage with each other. Mātauranga Māori assists in the balance of the tension between design research, new experience design coupled with social inclusiveness. The case studies discussed illustrates how interactive activations can be a tool to unite people and culture yet also allow the participants to remember and reconnect with their heritage and for others to gain understanding and build connectedness. Allowing "the heart of people" to set the direction of the creative sector is a meaningful approach to fulfilling positive social impact, diversity, cultural acceptance, and wellbeing. As further suggestions for future research work, this paper can provide an interesting discussion and comparison with other critical design educational programs, such as that of OCAD (Ontario College of Art and Design) in Canada and draw links with placemaking projects in other cities, such as the case example of placemaking in Michigan, by the Michigan Municipal League (MML/League). In addition, AUT has recently signed a partnership with two South American Universities. The partnership includes research projects that support South American institutions to reconnect with the indigenous people through integrating cultural values and practices with learning and teaching.

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